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ABSTRACT

The children's picture book and parent/teacher discussion guide present disabilities as among the many "differences" that make the world interesting. Acceptance of people with handicaps is stressed in the sample questions and answers in the discussion guide. Fifteen additional resources (print, audiovisual, and other) are recommended. (DB)

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Keith Edward's Different Day

Story & Illustrations
by Karin Melberg Schwier

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Keith Edward Rennenberg, who is five years old, woke up very excited one day. He had a feeling today was going to be DIFFERENT. He hurried to eat his breakfast cereal and drink his juice. Nothing DIFFERENT about that.

When he had finished, Keith Edward — who wasn't very good at winking — gave his mom the very best WINK he could with BOTH EYES. Just like always. But today would be special! Today he was going with his mom to the store and then to the library for storytime.

Keith Edward likes storytime very much because the woman who reads the stories always makes funny faces and wears big floppy hats. She holds the books way up so all the boys and girls can see the pictures and there is always plenty of apple juice and yummy cookies.

Keith Edward and his mom sat on the bench at the bus stop and waited for the bus to take them to the store.

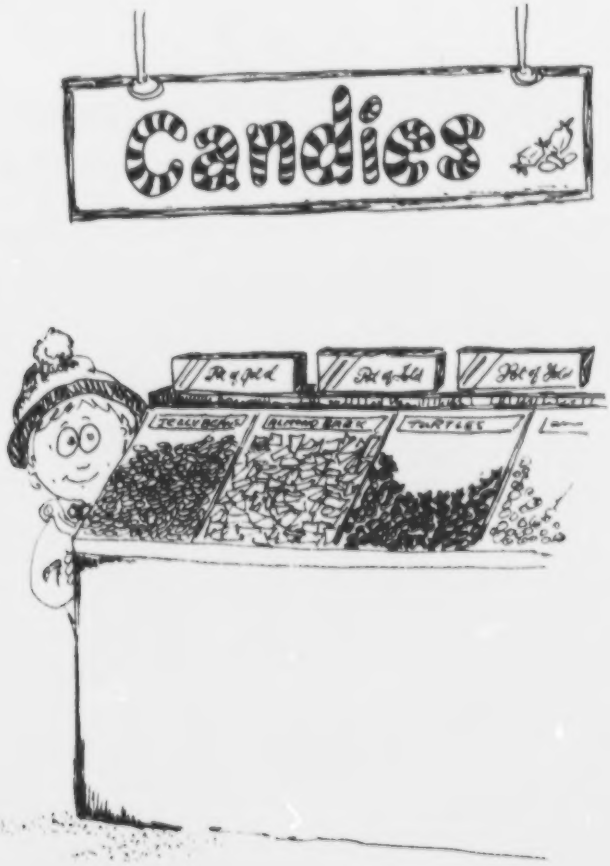
Keith Edward watched as the cars and trucks whizzed by and made lots of noise on the street. Then someone sat down on the bench with a THUMP! Keith Edward turned to see and WHAT A SURPRISE! A big man sat there, but he wasn't like any man Keith Edward had ever seen.

The man wore work clothes and big work boots, just like Keith Edward's Uncle Lionel wore to fix his tractor on the farm. But this man was DIFFERENT! His face was sort of flat and his eyes were skinny ... and his tongue! Keith Edward had never seen such a big tongue! It didn't even fit in the man's mouth.

CTS
BUS
STOP

The man looked at Keith Edward and smiled. He gave Keith Edward a BIG WINK with ONE EYE. Keith Edward, who wasn't very good at winking, gave the man the best WINK he could with BOTH EYES. Then the bus came in a big WHOOSH to take Keith Edward and his mom to the store. The man waved and said, "GOOD-BYE!" and Keith Edward waved back and said, "GOOD-BYE!" "That's kinda different," thought Keith Edward.

At the store, Keith Edward pressed up against the candy counter. He took a big sniff of all the wonderful, warm, chocolatey smells.



Just as he was deciding what his very most favourite candy was, he heard a THUMP! Keith Edward turned to see and WHAT A SURPRISE! Right beside him was a woman sitting in a chair, but it wasn't like any chair Keith Edward had ever seen! This chair was DIFFERENT!

It had big shiny wheels, just like the ones on the big bike that belonged to Keith Edward's Uncle Lionel.

But this woman didn't have to pedal to make hers go. She just pushed a button and the chair went WHIRRR! Keith Edward looked down and saw what had made the THUMP!

The woman's purse had fallen on the floor, so Keith Edward picked it up and gave it to her. The lady smiled. "Thank you very much, young man!" she said.

Candies
ALMOND BARK
TURTLES

Then she gave him a BIG WINK with ONE EYE. Keith Edward, who STILL wasn't very good at winking, gave the woman the best wink he could with BOTH EYES. She waved and spun her shiny chair around with a WHIRRR and zoomed away. "That's kinda different," thought Keith Edward.

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Keith Edward pulled on his mom's hand to hurry her along. He didn't want to be late for storytime. They pushed open the big glass doors of the library and soon they joined many other moms and dads and boys and girls.

Keith Edward sat down on the floor and wiggled up close so he could see and hear. Just as the woman with the floppy hat was about to start, someone sat down beside Keith Edward with a THUMP!

Keith Edward turned to see and WHAT A SURPRISE! It was a little girl and on her head was a white helmet, just like the one Keith Edward's Uncle Lionel wears when he plays hockey. The helmet protects Uncle Lionel so he doesn't hurt his head in case he falls down on the ice.

The little girl in the helmet smiled at Keith Edward and offered him a cookie with pink icing. Keith Edward smiled back and took it.

Then the little girl gave him a BIG WINK with ONE EYE! Keith Edward, who STILL wasn't very good at winking, gave the little girl the best wink he could with BOTH EYES! Munching on his cookie, Keith Edward thought, "That's kinda different."

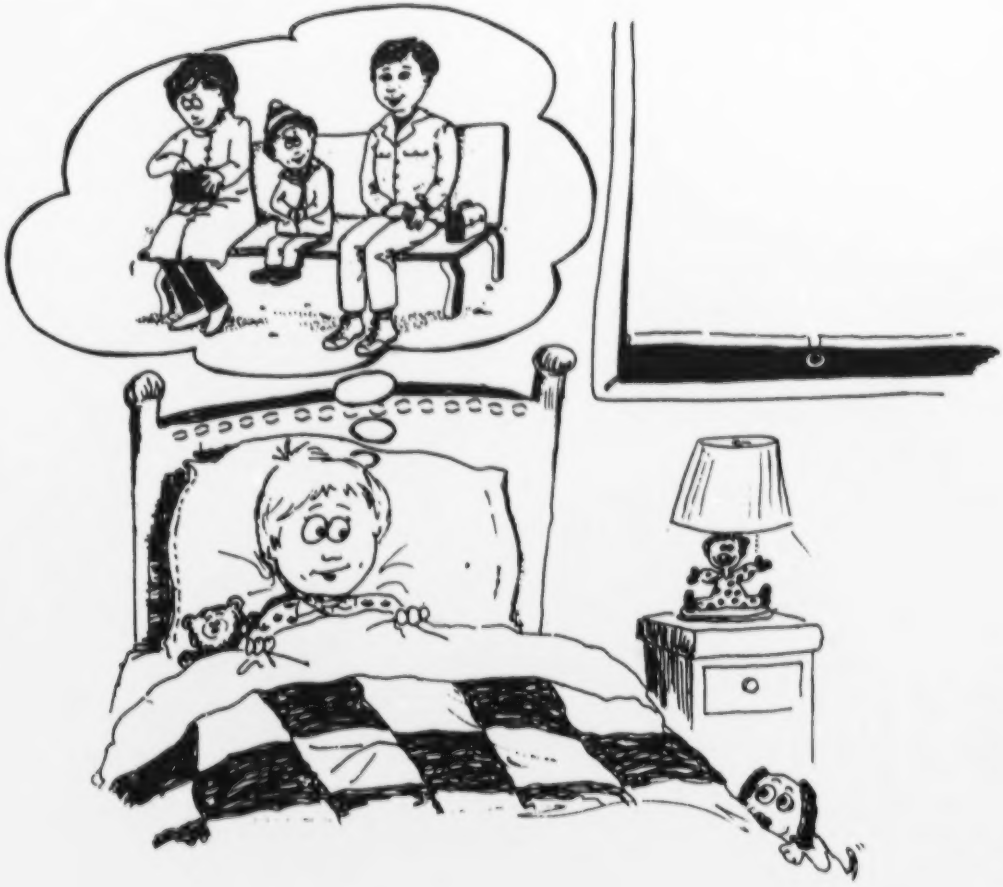
That night at bed time as Keith Edward's mom tucked the warm covers up under his chin and gave him a kiss on the nose, Keith Edward asked a question.

"Why are some people kinda DIFFERENT than me?" he asked.

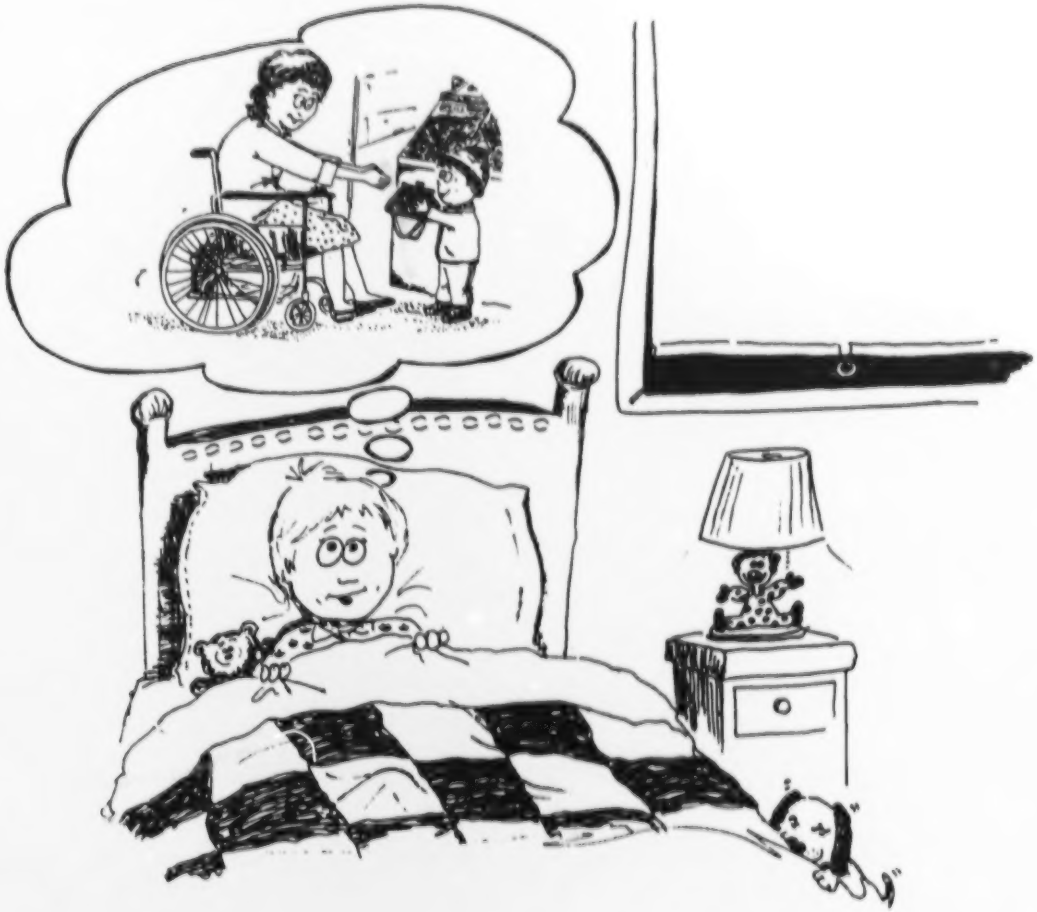
"Because," said Keith Edward's mom, "when a baby grows inside his mom's tummy before he is born, he is like a very hard puzzle. Usually, all the pieces of the puzzle fit together. But sometimes, a piece of the puzzle gets lost or bent or gets put in the wrong place. Then when the baby is born, he is just a little bit DIFFERENT."

Squinting his eyes almost shut, Keith Edward wondered, "Is that why I wink different than everyone else?

Keith Edward's mom smiled and said, "Sometimes it just takes longer for some people to learn something new. But if you try very hard, sooner or later, you'll get it."



Keith Edward thought. He thought about the man at the bus stop.

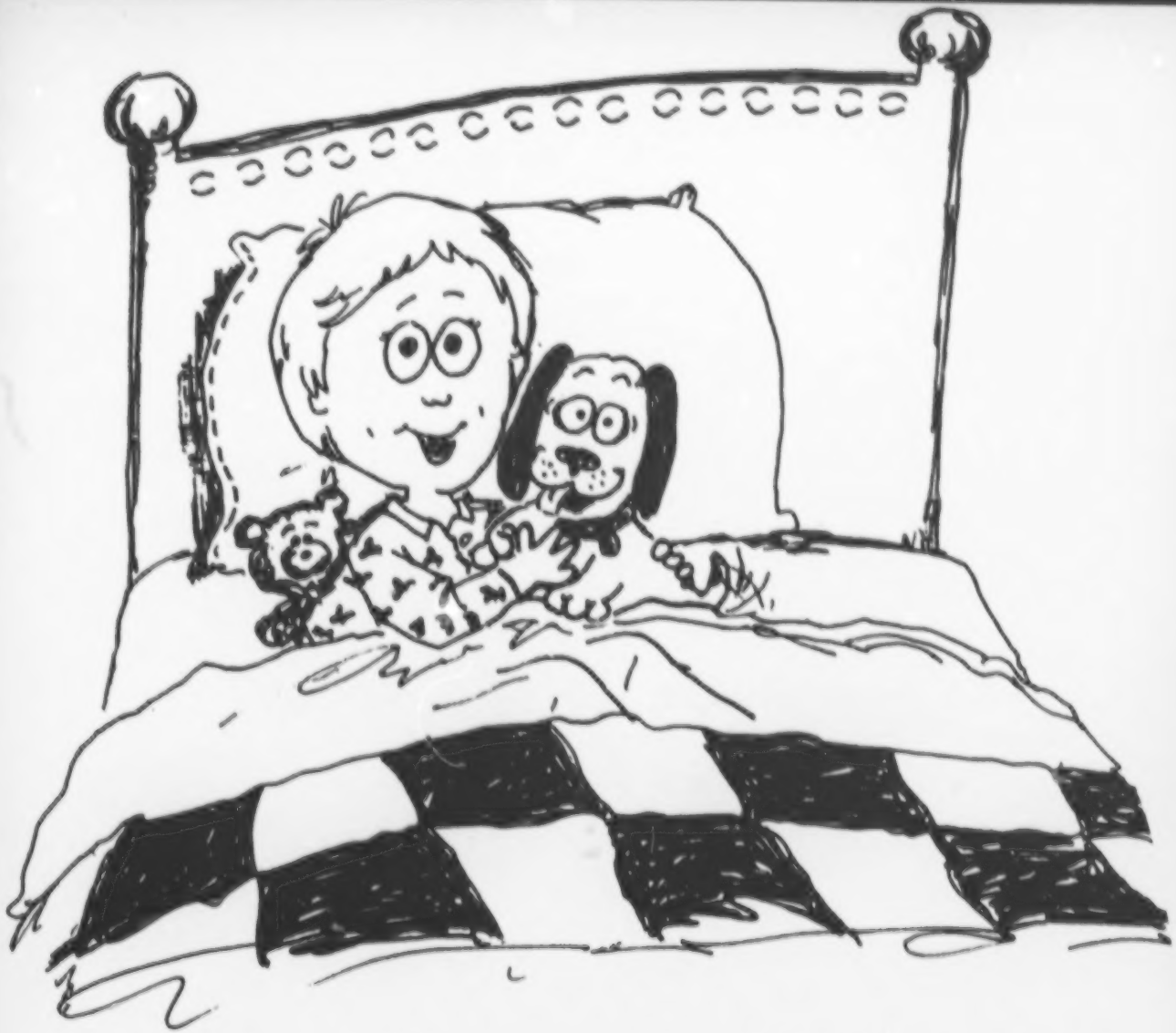


He thought about the woman at the candy counter.

He thought about the little girl at storytime.
He thought they had all been kinda nice and then ...

Keith Edward smiled. "Then DIFFERENT is not bad," he said. "DIFFERENT is just DIFFERENT!"

Keith Edward's mom gave him a big WINK. Keith Edward, who was getting a little better at winking, gave his mom the very best WINK he could AND HE DID IT WITH ONE EYE!



"I've had," he declared proudly, "a very DIFFERENT day!"

Keith Edward's Different Day

'Different Is Just Different!'
Parent/Teacher's Discussion Guide

A patchwork of colours, sizes, shapes, sounds and abilities make up our world. It makes everything more interesting! How boring it would be if everyone were exactly alike! While one person may look, sound or act differently than someone else, it's just part of the kaleidoscope! We all belong. That's the message of *Keith Edward's Different Day*.

If you're a parent or teacher interested in helping youngsters develop a positive acceptance of people with differences, you may want to read *Keith Edward's Different Day* as a discussion starter. For a long time, we've told children "Shhh!" or "Don't stare!" when they notice someone who seems different. You might be surprised with the questions they've been storing up!

You might want a little help to set the tone for acceptance of people with handicaps, encouraging children to focus on what makes every one of us unique. Here are a few questions and answers to get you started. And at the end of this book, you'll find a list of audio-visual and print resources for children and teenagers. For more, contact your local Association for Community Living or The G. Allan Roeher Institute national library, Kinsmen Building, York University Campus, 4700 Keele Street, Downsview, Ontario, M3J 1P3.

Q. How does the woman at the candy counter make her chair move?

A. On the back of her wheelchair is a big battery. It works like the engine of a car, only much quieter! She pushes a little button, almost like turning the key in a car. She steers with another little lever. Some chairs don't have a battery. The person pushes the wheel rims by hand. Many stores and street corners have been fixed so people in wheelchairs can go anywhere they want. The next time you go shopping, pretend you're in a wheelchair and imagine what it might be like.

Q. Why does the man at the bus stop have a big tongue? Does it hurt?

A. No, it doesn't hurt. That's just the way he was made. The man has something called Down Syndrome. That means he learns things more slowly and has certain physical features like

narrower eyes and a larger tongue than most people; because his tongue takes up more room, speech is more difficult. People with a mental handicap have to learn how to talk just like you did. It just takes longer. You can help by listening carefully. That shows you want to hear what they have to say! Many people with Down Syndrome go to school, have jobs and get married.

Q. What would happen if the little girl at the library had a seizure?

A. Seizures are a little like tiny lightening storms inside someone's head. There are electrical shorts in the system and they make the body do things it wouldn't usually do. If the little girl has a seizure and falls down, everyone should stay calm. Don't be frightened, even though it may look a little scary! Someone should go get an adult. Move things out of her way so she doesn't hurt herself and don't put anything in her mouth. She might thrash about a bit and you should wait until she has calmed down, then sit with her, maybe rub her arm or shoulder and talk quietly while she recovers. She might feel very tired afterwards and maybe will want to have a little nap. She probably won't remember what happened. It's very important not to make fun of it. There is nothing she can do about it and you don't want to hurt her feelings.

Not everyone who has epilepsy wears a helmet. Many people who have epilepsy know when they are going to have a seizure so they can let you know and prepare for it. Sometimes people with cerebral palsy wear something to protect their head because they can't always control how their bodies move. A helmet is just for protection.

Q. Why do some people take a long time to learn new things?

A. Everyone learns things at different speeds. You might have taken forever to learn to ride a two-wheeler and your brother may have got it in only a day! You think arithmetic is a cinch, but your friend thinks it is very hard. It is the same for someone who has a mental handicap. He may have to work a lot longer to learn to tie his shoes, cross the street, make a sandwich, take a bus or count money. His ability to learn never developed the same way as other people's did, so he has to try harder. All of us need the help of other people, even after we are grown up. People who have a mental handicap can do many, many things like play video games, ride a horse, swim, have a job, play the piano, take trips on airplanes, live in an apartment, cook, drive a car, get married — you name it!

Q. Do people with handicaps get teased a lot?

A. We all know what it feels like to have someone make fun of us: our new haircut, our freckles, our weight, the funny checkered coat our Mom got for us on sale. Maybe we gave the wrong answer in class and everybody laughed. Remember how you felt? People with handicaps feel just the same way when people make fun of them. It's not a good thing to do because it hurts people. If you see someone in school being teased because she is handicapped, you can help stop it. You can stick up for her. You can sit with her during lunch or walk her home after school. Treat her just as you would anyone else; she doesn't want pity, she isn't "special". She's just another kid. Sometimes people tease because they don't know what she's really like or they're afraid. If they watch you, they just might stop hurting her feelings.

Q. If someone has a handicap, couldn't they go to the doctor and have it fixed?

A. There are many things a doctor can help with, but not all handicaps can be fixed. The man with Down Syndrome will always have it, but that doesn't mean we should feel sorry for him. If he spends a lot of time with people who encourage him to learn as much as he can and if he is treated like anyone else, he will grow into the best person he can be. The lady in the wheelchair has paraplegia: that's a difficult word that means her legs don't work like yours or mine. Doctors can't fix that, althought they're working on it, but she makes sure she had a good wheelchair so she can do almost anything! It's very important for people who build streets and buildings to remember there are people using wheelchairs and to make sure everything is accessible. The little girl in the library has epilepsy. There is no cure, but a doctor can give her some medication to control it. Remember, doctors are only part of the picture; people with handicaps are not always "sick", no more than you or your friends. There are many other people who can see that someone with a handicap lives a full life. That includes you! If you know someone with a handicap, maybe you can:

- invite him to a birthday party
- have a sleep-over
- ask her to come outside and play
- don't ignore him or treat him as "special" — just treat him like any other friend

- do homework together
- give the dog a bath together
- introduce her to another friend
- take him along on your paper route
- go to a show together

What other kinds of things can you do?

Q. Do you know anyone like the people Keith Edward met in the story?

What are some of the things they can do well? What are some things you can do? How does it make you feel?

What are some things they need help with? What do you need help with? How do you feel when you get it right?

Recommended Resources for Children and Young Teens

Print

Be Fit Be Fun: A study unit developing peer sensitization through recreation and physical activity, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, 323 Chapel Street, Suite 200, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 7Z2, 1987.

Don't Stop the Music, Robert Perske, Abingdon Press, 201 Eighth Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee, 370202, 1986.

The Family Book: For parents who have learned their child has a Mental Handicap, The G. Allan Roeher Institute, Toronto, 1986.

Friends After All, series of five booklets, Suzan Wapnick and Eric A. Kimmel, Ednick Communications, Box 3612, Portland, Oregon, 97208, 1986.

Like Me, Alan Brightman, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., Inc., 34 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108, 1976.

Living with a Brother or Sister with Special Needs, Donald J. Meyer, et al., University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA., 1985.

My Friend David: A source book about Down Syndrome and a personal story about friendship, Jean Edwards, David Dawson, Ednick Communications, Box 3612, Portland, Oregon, 97208, 1983.

Our Brother has Down Syndrome: An introduction for children, Shelley Cairo, Annick Press, Ltd., Toronto, Ontario, M2N 5S2, 1987.

Play for Play's Sake: Cooperative games as a strategy for integration, NIMR, Toronto, 1984, Rev. 1985.

Show Me No Mercy, Robert Perske, Abingdon Press, 201 Eighth Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee, 37202, 1984.

The Story of Philip, Elizabeth Kouhi, Queenstown House, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1982.

Audio-Visual

A Question of Learning, produced for The G. Allan Roeher Institute by Metavideo Associates, Inc., 1987.

Call Me Eric, Ontario Association for Community Living, 1376 Bayview Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M4G 3A3, 1985.

Let My Try, part of the "Like You, Like Me" series, animated short, 6 mins., Committee on Special Education, Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation, 1977.

Other

Kids on the Block, Inc., a troupe of puppets with various disabilities, 1712 Eye Street N.W., Suite 1008, Washington, D.C. 20006.

Canada's National Institute for the Study of Public Policy Affecting Persons with an Intellectual Impairment

The G. Allan Roeher Institute has two goals:

- to identify and anticipate future trends that will support the presence, participation, self-determination and contribution of persons with an intellectual impairment in their communities;
- to foster the exchange of ideas leading to new ways of thinking about persons with an intellectual impairment.

Conducting and sponsoring research, The Institute publishes material in a wide range of areas, with a major focus on public policy and funding, on studies of innovative social programs and on the development of policy alternatives. The Institute offers training programs and workshops on topics such as integrated education, supported work, and alternatives to intrusives. Through its National Information and Resource Services (NIRS), which includes a library, a book and film distribution service, and a computer accessible information system, The Institute provides up-to-date information to the public, professionals and community groups. The Institute also publishes the quarterly magazine **entourage**.

The G. Allan Roeher Institute is sponsored by the Canadian Association for Community Living, a voluntary organization bringing together over 400 local and 12 provincial and territorial associations working on behalf of persons with an intellectual impairment.

For more information about The G. Allan Roeher Institute, please contact us at:
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For Jim, Erin, Ben
Jenna, Joel
and the real Keith Edward